

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

Please amend claims 11 and 30, as shown below. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the Application:

**Claims 1 - 10 (canceled)**

1 **Claim 11** (currently amended): A cassette having a hollow for receiving and retaining a tissue specimen for fluid treatment preparatory to histological examination, comprising a top portion having a perforated bottom wall and a bottom portion snap or friction mounted to the top portion, the bottom portion having ~~[[a]] side and bottom walls~~ [[wall]] removable along a frangible tear line in said side walls.

2  
**Claim 12** (previously presented): The cassette of claim 11, wherein said removable side wall bridges said top and bottom portions.

3  
**Claim 13** (previously presented): The cassette of claim 11, wherein said removable side wall includes a pair of frangible tear lines.

4  
**Claim 14** (previously presented): The cassette of claim 11, wherein said removable side wall includes a projecting tab to facilitate removal of said side wall.

5  
**Claim 15** (previously presented): The cassette of claim 11, wherein said top and bottom portions are molded of a synthetic plastic material.

6  
**Claim 16** (previously presented): The cassette of claim 11, further comprising a pre-formed foam block in said hollow.

7  
**Claim 17** (previously presented): The cassette of claim 11, further comprising agarose in said hollow.

<sup>8</sup>  
**Claim 18** (previously presented): The cassette of claim <sup>1</sup>~~11~~, further comprising both agarose and a pre-formed foam block in said hollow.

<sup>9</sup>  
**Claim 19** (previously presented): The cassette of claim <sup>6</sup>~~16~~, further comprising filter paper positioned in said hollow to retard egress of molten paraffin.

<sup>10</sup>  
**Claim 20** (previously presented): A method for preparing a tissue sample for analysis, comprising the steps of:

- (a) orienting the tissue sample in the cassette of claim <sup>1</sup>~~11~~;
- (b) embedding an oriented tissue sample in a porous embedding media; and
- (c) directly processing the embedded tissue sample with tissue processing reagents while maintaining the original orientation of the sample without a post-processing paraffin-embedding step.

<sup>11</sup>  
**Claim 21** (previously presented): The method of claim <sup>10</sup>~~20~~, wherein the porous embedding media comprises agarose.

<sup>12</sup>  
**Claim 22** (previously presented): The method of claim <sup>10</sup>~~20~~, wherein the porous embedding media comprises a pre-formed foam.

<sup>13</sup>  
**Claim 23** (previously presented): The method of claim <sup>12</sup>~~22~~, wherein the tissue sample is oriented in an opening or depression formed in said pre-formed foam.

<sup>14</sup>  
**Claim 24** (previously presented): The method of claim <sup>13</sup>~~23~~, including the step of forming said opening or depression by cutting, drilling, punching or molding.

<sup>15</sup>  
**Claim 25** (previously presented): The method of claim <sup>13</sup>~~23~~, wherein the tissue sample is embedded flush with or below an outer surface of the pre-formed foam.

<sup>14</sup>  
Claim ~~26~~ (previously presented): The method of claim <sup>13</sup>~~23~~, wherein the pre-formed foam comprises a preformed block of phenolic foam.

<sup>17</sup>  
Claim ~~27~~ (previously presented): The method of claim <sup>11</sup>~~21~~, wherein said agarose has a melting point in the range of about 55 to 65°C.

<sup>18</sup>  
Claim ~~28~~ (previously presented): The method of claim <sup>10</sup>~~20~~, further including the step of sectioning the embedded tissue sample following processing.

<sup>19</sup>  
Claim ~~29~~ (previously presented): The method of claim <sup>10</sup>~~20~~, wherein said tissue processing reagents are selected from the group consisting essentially of aqueous formalin, water, xylene, alcohol and paraffin.

<sup>20</sup>  
Claim ~~30~~ (currently amended): A hollow cassette for receiving and retaining a tissue specimen for fluid treatment preparatory to histological examination, comprising a top portion having a perforated bottom wall and a bottom portion snap or friction mounted to the top portion, the bottom portion having [[a]] side and bottom walls [[wall]] removable along a frangible tear line in said side walls, the hollow being filled, at least in part, by a porous embedding medium.

<sup>21</sup>  
Claim ~~31~~ (previously presented): The cassette of claim <sup>20</sup>~~31~~, wherein said porous embedding medium comprises agarose and/or a pre-formed foam.

<sup>22</sup>  
Claim ~~32~~ (previously presented): The cassette of claim <sup>20</sup>~~30~~, wherein said removable side wall bridges said top and bottom portions.

<sup>23</sup>  
Claim ~~33~~ (previously presented): The cassette of claim <sup>20</sup>~~30~~, wherein said removable side wall includes a pair of frangible tear lines.

<sup>24</sup>  
Claim ~~34~~ (previously presented): The cassette of claim <sup>20</sup>~~30~~, wherein said removable side wall includes a projecting tab to facilitate removal of said side wall.

<sup>25</sup>  
Claim ~~35~~ (previously presented): The cassette of claim <sup>20</sup>~~30~~, wherein said top and bottom portions are molded of a synthetic plastic material.

<sup>26</sup>  
Claim ~~36~~ (previously presented): The cassette of claim <sup>21</sup>~~31~~, and further comprising filter paper positioned within the cassette to retard egress of molten paraffin.

<sup>27</sup>  
Claim ~~37~~ (previously presented): The cassette of claim <sup>21</sup>~~31~~, wherein the agarose has a melting point in the range of 55 to 65° C.

<sup>28</sup>  
Claim ~~38~~ (previously presented): The cassette of claim <sup>21</sup>~~31~~, wherein the foam comprises a phenolic foam.

<sup>29</sup>  
Claim ~~39~~ (previously presented): A cassette having a hollow for receiving and retaining a tissue specimen for fluid treatment preparatory to histological examination, comprising a top portion having a perforated bottom wall and a bottom portion snap or friction mounted to the top portion, the bottom portion having a side wall removable along a tear line, said cassette further comprising a pre-formed foam block and/or agarose in said hollow.

<sup>30</sup>  
Claim ~~40~~ (previously presented): The cassette of claim <sup>29</sup>~~39~~, wherein said removable side wall bridges said top and bottom portions.

<sup>31</sup>  
Claim ~~41~~ (previously presented): The cassette of claim <sup>29</sup>~~39~~, wherein said removable side wall includes a pair of tear lines.

<sup>32</sup>  
Claim ~~42~~ (previously presented): The cassette of claim <sup>29</sup>~~39~~, wherein said removable side wall includes a projecting tab to facilitate removal of said side wall.

<sup>33</sup>  
**Claim 43** (previously presented): The cassette of claim <sup>29</sup>~~39~~, wherein said top and bottom portions are molded of a synthetic plastic material.

<sup>34</sup>  
**Claim 44** (previously presented): The cassette of claim <sup>29</sup>~~39~~, further comprising both agarose and a pre-formed foam block in said hollow.

<sup>35</sup>  
**Claim 45** (previously presented): The cassette of claim <sup>29</sup>~~39~~, further comprising filter paper positioned in said hollow to retard egress of molten paraffin.

<sup>36</sup>  
**Claim 46** (previously presented): A method for preparing a tissue sample for analysis, comprising the steps of:

- (a) orienting the tissue sample in the cassette of claim <sup>29</sup>~~39~~;
- (b) embedding an oriented tissue sample in a porous embedding media; and
- (c) directly processing the embedded tissue sample with tissue processing reagents while maintaining the original orientation of the sample without a post-processing paraffin-embedding step.

<sup>37</sup>  
**Claim 47** (previously presented): The method of claim <sup>36</sup>~~46~~, wherein the tissue sample is oriented in an opening or depression formed in said pre-formed foam.

<sup>38</sup>  
**Claim 48** (previously presented): The method of claim <sup>36</sup>~~46~~, including the step of forming said opening or depression by cutting, drilling, punching or molding.

<sup>39</sup>  
**Claim 49** (previously presented): The method of claim <sup>37</sup>~~47~~, wherein the tissue sample is embedded flush with or below an outer surface of the pre-formed foam.

<sup>40</sup>  
**Claim 50** (previously presented): The method of claim <sup>37</sup>~~47~~, wherein the pre-formed foam comprises a preformed block of phenolic foam.

<sup>41</sup>  
**Claim 51** (previously presented): The method of claim <sup>34</sup>~~46~~, wherein said agarose has a melting point in the range of about 55 to 65°C.

<sup>42</sup>  
**Claim 52** (previously presented): The method of claim <sup>36</sup>~~46~~, further including the step of sectioning the embedded tissue sample following processing.

<sup>43</sup>  
**Claim 53** (previously presented): The method of claim <sup>36</sup>~~46~~, wherein said tissue processing reagents are selected from the group consisting essentially of aqueous formalin, water, xylene, alcohol and paraffin.

<sup>44</sup>  
**Claim 54** (previously presented): A hollow cassette for receiving and retaining a tissue specimen for fluid treatment preparatory to histological examination, comprising a top portion having a perforated bottom wall and a bottom portion snap or friction mounted to the top portion, the bottom portion having a side wall removable along a tear line, the hollow being filled, at least in part, by a porous embedding medium, which comprises agarose and/or a pre-formed foam.

<sup>45</sup>  
**Claim 55** (previously presented): The cassette of claim <sup>44</sup>~~54~~, wherein said removable side wall bridges said top and bottom portions.

<sup>46</sup>  
**Claim 56** (previously presented): The cassette of claim <sup>44</sup>~~54~~, wherein said removable side wall includes a pair of tear lines.

<sup>47</sup>  
**Claim 57** (previously presented): The cassette of claim <sup>44</sup>~~54~~, wherein said removable side wall includes a projecting tab to facilitate removal of said side wall.

<sup>48</sup>  
**Claim 58** (previously presented): The cassette of claim <sup>44</sup>~~54~~, wherein said top and bottom portions are molded of a synthetic plastic material.

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<sup>49</sup>  
Claim ~~59~~ (previously presented): The cassette of claim ~~54~~<sup>44</sup>, and further comprising filter paper positioned within the cassette to retard egress of molten paraffin.

<sup>50</sup>  
Claim ~~60~~ (previously presented): The cassette of claim ~~54~~<sup>44</sup>, wherein the agarose has a melting point in the range of 55 to 65° C.

<sup>51</sup>  
Claim ~~61~~ (previously presented): The cassette of claim ~~54~~<sup>44</sup>, wherein the foam comprises a phenolic foam.

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